

# The Birmingham Convention

## AN EDITOR'S NOTES.

It was a laymen's convention, but the ministry was there in force. About one-third of the twelve hundred registered delegates were pastors.

These laymen meant business. They were prompt in attendance upon the sessions and when they got there they got all that they could out of them.

Fifteen hundred men on the Lord's business was an inspiring sight and fifteen thousand will be touched by the enthusiasm generated in this convention.

Before the convention adjourned, many of our missionaries in far lands had received telegrams telling them to begin work on new buildings for their schools and hospitals.

The convention was worth all that it cost, and every one that attended felt that he would not have missed it for any price. It will mean new life to a discouraged church.

Fifteen hundred male voices singing the doxology made the roof tremble and Satan's host also trembled. The convention flung the battle line of the church far into the heart of heathendom.

It made many a pastor's mouth water on Wednesday morning when the presiding officer had to force the people to quit giving money. It was an experience which many pastors have not had.

There was no clap-trap in any of the speeches and no spurious enthusiasm aroused. All appeals were made upon a high plane. Man's obligation to do the work that his Master had commanded was stressed.

The laymen were a clean-cut looking set of men. They were a well-dressed set, clear-eyed and forceful looking. As a rule they were better dressed than an ordinary church court composed largely of ministers.

Gov. Glenn made a good moderator and was able at any time to bring the convention to its feet with enthusiasm. The mission work of our church will be advanced in his coming tour of the church in the interest of Home Missions.

One great foreign mission field was overlooked, and that was sections of Louisiana with its great flood of non-Christian foreigners coming in every year. But the field is so big that no one part could claim any special attention.

It was a representative body of men. Every legitimate avocation was represented. You could find famous bankers, prominent lawyers, railroad men, farmers, in fact, if you needed a man for any good work, you could find him on the floor of the convention.

There were three policemen stationed at the door of the auditorium. They said that it was the easiest job they had ever had. Only one had anything to do, and he had cautioned a layman not to talk to his friend at the door while Mr. White was speaking inside.

Some one in Birmingham knew how to take care of a big convention. Every imaginable want was cared for, everything moved off with a smoothness which was notable. There was no clank of machinery and we knew that there were good engineers behind the convention from the manner in which the machinery was oiled and the efficiency with which it did its work.

The pastors took a back seat until the last night of the convention, when many of them tried to get in a word. Hundreds of laymen were trying to get the floor to give their money, but the pastor knew how to get the attention of the Moderator, and the layman left with his money in his pocket. Moral—Let the layman talk when he feels like it, it means more cash. Many a collection has been ruined by the preacher not knowing when he has said enough.

## Conclusion.

The convention is over. Let one minister sum up as briefly as he can the good that came to him.

1. The speakers brought some great messages. They were both educational and inspirational. I have never heard a finer collection of addresses. They kindled anew the fires within our hearts.

2. The singing helped us. It was worth the trip to hear that crowd sing some of the grand old hymns of the church, or to hear it join in the chorus of some new gospel hymn. One could not hear that singing and go back home the same man as when he came.

3. The elbow touch with Christian workers from all over the church gave new visions of the work and new courage.

4. But the best of all was the inspiration that came from looking into the faces of those 1,131 delegates. Every minister has times when he feels like Elijah under the juniper tree, he wonders if he is the only one left. No minister who looked into that sea of earnest faces will have that feeling soon again. When I thought how that many of these men had left pressing business and traveled at their own expense for hundreds of miles to come and study the great missionary problems for three days from nine-thirty in the morning to ten-thirty at night, my heart burned within me.

The student world awaits with interest the development of the graded system of Bible Study promised by the International Sunday School Association. After all the attempts in recent years to develop some method by which to do better work, and after all the splendid achievements of Sunday School workers, the sum total of results does not seem to be beyond that which was accomplished when home training was more faithful. The godly father and mother, possessed of ordinary intelligence and interest, will with the holy ingenuity of consecration and love come nearer to solving the problem of how to teach the young than all the schools of scientific investigation.